RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 13*th December*, 1991/ 22, *Agrahayana* 1913 (*Saka*)

The House met at eleven of the clock. **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Ban on cultivation of Kesari Dal

*321. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have banned the cultivation of Kesari Dal due to the presence of neurotoxin BOAA in its grains which causes paralysis of lower limbs;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Scientists of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute have succeeded in elimination the toxins from the Kesari Dal as indicated in a news item captioned "Kesari Dal-IARI break-through in removing toxin" which appeared in the times of India, dated 19th November, 1991; and

(c) if so, by when Government propose to remove the ban on the cultivation of Kesari Dal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Government of India requested the Kesari Dal growing States to ban its cultivation. According to the latest information available, excepting Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, other States have banned its cultivation.

(b) Scientists at Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, through the use of bio-technological methods, have developed strains of kesari dal (lathyrus sativus) which have shown negligible neurotoxin (BOAA) content. These strains are presently under evaluation at IARI and are likely to be available for multi-location testing in about 3 to 4 years.

(c) The removal of ban would depend upon the availability of suitable varieties free of or low in neurotoxin content which will be safe for human consumption and would provide reasonable yields. As such no time-bound commitment is possible.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this Kesari Dal (lathyrus sativus), which is a very very hardy plant and which can withstand drought as well as floods, is grown extensively, though surreptitiously, and consumed by many people in parts of Madhya Pradesh, U.P. and West Bengal.

SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM: Bihar also.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Yes, Bihar also. Most of the available types of this pulse have toxic content and it is as high as 0.61 per cent. But the seeds of genetically-engineered plants, produced by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, have a very low toxic content, ranging from 0.02 per cent to 0.05 per cent. This level is fit for human consumption. In Maharashtra, we call it barbati chada. It is not Kesari Dal. It is wrongly spelt here. It is Khesari Dal. As I said, this is reported to be widely consumed, despite the ban, in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, U.P. and West Bengal. May I know from the hon. Minister, to what extent, the removal of the ban on the cultivation of the Dal will reduce the demand for the other varieties of dals like Moong, Malka, Arhar, Gram, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I fully agree with the honourable Member that this kesari dal plant is a very hardy plant, it can withstand so many natural deformities, as we call them, or drought or even much of water and it can also withstand attacks of some pests. But the question is whether we can allow it at the cost of human lives. That is the only thing. If we have that type of dal which has that much less of neurotoxin content, we

would surely release it at the earliest. Now, this one which we have at present is simply a question of research. Our scientists have found a gene, and when we are fully satisfied and when we propagate it, then we shall let them have it. We are also very anxious to have it because it can serve a lot of purposes. We are short of dals, and we want to do the utmost and propagate it as soon as possible, but that "as soon as possible" also takes time because, as they say, even hurry also takes time. But we do not want to hurry at the cost of human lives. Formerly the neurotoxin content was about 14 per cent but now it is less than 50 per cent of it. But still, when this paralysis strikes, it is irreversible. So, I cannot take any chances with human lives, whatever may be the case. So I will ask my scientists who are working on it and, as soon as it is available, we shall not delay it any further.

MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Sir, my second supplementary: I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether the Government is aware that it would be a very high-yielding, "Pearls Crop"—which is an old farmers' phrase—and would give the cultivators much monetary returns. As the crop does not require either irrigation or fertilizers, it would greatly benefit the small and marginal farmers in the country.Therefore, I would like to know from the Government as to when the Government proposes to release the Zero Beta Axili-amino LNI lathyrus sativus seeds to the farmers.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, I have already pointed out that there are no two different opinions. I have no conflict with that opinion. I would also like to have it—and its propagation also—but it is a question of human lives. It is as simple as that. And only when my scientists are satisfied and when the research takes its due course and we are satisfied will it be done. What we now have is 0.02 per cent, the latest find, the gene. That is also, I think, acceptable to the human body and it won't cause any malady. But to propagate it we must put it through the crucible, we must have some experience, and when we have that much of that type of seed available for the people, then we would like to have it.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, my question is in two parts. When the honourable Minister replied, he said that so far Madhya Pradesh has not banned the production of kesari dal—that was when Mr. Ramachandran read out the reply. Sir, this is shocking because we all know that Madhya Pradesh accounts for more than half the production of kesari dal in the country—about 4.7 lakh tonnes in an area of about seven lakh hectares. Also in the areas where the poor peasants cannot afford any other kind of food, payment is made to the poor labourers in the form of kesari dal and, therefore, they eat it. So, what steps is the Government taking to see that a ban is enforced in Madhya Pradesh when this is the area that cultivates the maximum amount of kesari dal, not even surreptitiously—there is no ban on it—and the poor labourers are being paid wages in the form of kesari dal and, naturally, they are going to die because there is no other way? So, what steps is the Government going to take?

Sir, part (b) of my quetion is, there is a certain report in the newspapers that because there is a resemblance to Bengal gram, kesari dal is being mixed with Bengal gram and despatched down South and, therefore, this paralysis is spreading down South also. Is the Government aware that there are unscrupulous traders who are doing this and, if so, are any steps being taken in this regard?

Sir, the final part of my question is...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, not now... *(Interruptions)*...

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Two are enough!

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I also agree with the hon. Member. She is

right that though so many States have banned it, it is still prevalent without any ban in Madhya Pradesh. It depends on the State Government. It is for the doctor to prescribe it, whatever the States are. We advised three States, Bengal, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Practically they grow much of it... (*Interruptions*). There is no question. You cannot allow people to die of that. If we know that that much ill effect is there, then, how can we allow it, how can we advise for it? We advise the State Governments. It is up to them to carry out it out which falls in their sphere. (*Interruptions*).

We are not only for an alternate crop, but we are trying to improve the variety of Kesari Dal. We are virtually at the threshold of having that. I can assure that I will again advise the State Governments. They should look to the health of the people. It affects younger generation, children and others. So, that is what it is. We will see to it, and I will advise them again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: About movement to South, she asked.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR. Other malpractices which take place, also come within the purview of the State Governments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: She is talking about inter-State movement.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We are not having any ban on the movement of agricultural products. There is a free movement.

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर: श्रीमान्, मंत्री जी ने बताया कि तीन-चार प्रदेशों को छोड़कर सब जगह बैन है । मेरा प्रश्न है कि यह प्रतिबंधित करने की सलाह सरकार ने कब दी और उन प्रदेशों ने जिन्होंने बैन नहीं किया क्या कारण है कि वह बैन नहीं कर रहे हैं । ऐसे ही महाराष्ट्र को ऐसा लगता है कि जब कुमारी सरोज खापर्डे ने पूछा और उन्होंने नाम बताया कि दूसरे नाम से वहां दाल पैदा होती है तो क्या महाराष्ट्र में बैन है या नहीं है ? अगर बैन नहीं है तो क्यों नहीं है ? क्या कारण इस प्रदेश ने बताया है, वहां पर बैन न करने के कारण क्या हैं ?

श्री बलराम जाखड़ : कारण फैसले का है । अगर वह फैसला कर लें कि यह जनहित में नहीं है, जैसा हमने बताया है इनको स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स को यहां के जो हमारे साइंटिस्ट्स हैं उनकी खोज का और उनकी जो जानकारी है उसको इत्तलाह दे दी गई है कि किस तरीके से यह नुकसानदेह होती है और खास तौर से बच्चों को और 1989 में भी दोबारा हमने रेक्वेस्ट की है स्टेट्स को कि ऐसा करना जनहित में ठीक नहीं है और मनुष्यों का जीवन अमूल्य है, एक जीवन भी जाना बहुत अनर्थ होता है, तो इसलिए आप कृपा करेंगे कि आप अपने यहां हमारे साइंटिस्ट्स के बताए हुए अनुसार ही करें ।

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर: 1989 के अन्दर प्रतिबंध करने की सलाह दी गई, 89 तक यह पैदा होती थी, तो 1989 में ही विशेषत: क्यों सलाह दी गई और उसका कारण क्या है, प्रदेशों ने तो बताया होगा कि हम इसलिए इसको प्रतिबंधित नहीं कर सकते, उसका प्रतिबंधित न करने का क्या कारण है ?

श्री बलराम जाखड़ : कारण तो सीधा है, जब बता दिया जाता है, कारण बता दिया जाता है और संभावित परिणाम बता दिए जाते हैं तो उसके पश्चात् उनको संभल जाना चाहिए । कहते हैं कि अकलमंद को तो इशारा ही काफी होता है । अगर स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स नहीं समझें तो क्या किया जाए ।

श्री रफीक आलम : वहां पर जो यह केसरी दाल है यह गरीब लोग ज्यादा इस्तेमाल करते हैं और यह बहुत चीपर है, अगर वाकई कोई इसमें खराबी है तो इसको दूर किया जाए ? लेकिन एनीमल कंजप्शन के लिए क्या नुकसान है ?

†[شری رفیق عالم : وہاں پر جو یہ کیسری دال ہے - یہ غریب لوگ زیادہ استعمال کرتے ہیں اور یہ بہت چیپ ہے - اگر واقعی کوئی اسمیں خرابی ہے تو اسکو دور کیا جائے - لیکن ایلیمنل کلزمشن کیلئے کیا نقصان ہے -]

श्री बलराम जाखड़ : मैंने तो मनुष्यों के लिए बात की थी, उसका दूसरे का पता बता देंगे ।

श्री शिवप्रसाद चनपुरिया : सभापति महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि इस देश में 7 करोड़ 40 लाख छोटे किसान हैं और उन सब के खेतों में जो रबी की खेती करते हैं उनमें केसरी दाल अधिकांशतः पैदा होती है । कुछ तो जान-बूझ कर करते हैं और कुछ अपनी पैदावार को बढ़ाने की गर्ज से करते हैं । चना थोड़ा जिसको केसरी कहा जाता और गेहूं, तीनों मिला करके अपनी पैदावार को ज्यादा बढ़ाना चाहते हैं । इन छोटे किसानों की पैदावार ज्यादा हो उसके लिए कृषि मंत्री महोदय ने क्या उपाय सोचा है ताकि यह थोड़ा की खेती बंद की जा सके ?

श्री बलराम जाखड़ : नए बीजों का उत्पादन और नए बीजों के अन्वेषण का सारा काम चालू है और जो हमने किया है वह काफी हद तक सफल भी हुआ है । पहले से उत्पादन बढ़ा है । जैसे-जैसे हमारे साइंसदान और तरक्की कर रहे हैं खोज और बढ़ती जा रही है और अच्छे बीज दिए जा रहे हैं । उनको तो यही है कि वह तबादला इस तरीके से किया जाए और वह हम करते हैं ।

SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI: The Kesari Dal affair created once a political crisis in Madhya Pradesh. It should not create another crisis now. I would like to know from the Minister as to what total area of cultivation has been underken for Kesari Dal production and how many people are affected by it. If you propose to ban it, what is the alternative before the Government before the ban takes place?

श्री बलराम जाखड़ : महोदय, एरिया का तो मैं उनको बता दूंगा और बाद में लिख कर भेज दूंगा, लेकिन जो स्टैप्स हमने लिए हैं वह स्टेट्स को बताना है कि यह हानिकारक है, जनहित में भी हानिकारक है और इस तरीके से देखने की बात है प्रोडक्शन के स्टैटेस्टिक्स तो इसका देकर मैं बता दूंगा क्योंकि मेरे पास है । बट, I will have to inform him according to हमारे पास एनैक्स में है । That is a statistical question. I can refer to it.

SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI: What is the alternative?

श्री बलराम जाखड़ : आल्टरनेटिव तो मैंने बताया कि नए बीजों की खोज और उनको बदल देना है । नए बीजों की खोज सतत प्रयत्न के साथ जारी है और वह तब तक हम सांस नहीं लेंगे जब तक काम पूरा न हो ।

SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI: That means till an alternative is found you will continue to let the people take poison.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: We won't like that. That is why we are trying to ban it. That is why we have said it is not good for health. It has ill-effects. Otherwise why I should have said it? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI T. A. MOHAMMED SAQHY: In spite of the ban on the Kesari Dal it is available in the market. What drastic steps are going to be taken by the Central Government in this regard? Cultivation of the Kesari Dal is being done by all the farmers. I would like to know if there is any move from the Central Government to destroy the Kesari Dal crops. Just like the narcotic crops, are destroyed?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: As I have already stated that is a question

†[ ] Transliteration in Arabic Script.

of advising the State Governments about the ill-effects of the Kesari Dal. We have to educate the people to do it because it is at the cost of their own health. It does not mean that we are going to destroy it. We have left it to the State Governments to find ways and means to persuade the people not to sow it at all. Till a final solution to this problem is found and neuro-toxin-free Dal is available, we must wait.

SHRI T. A. MOHAMMED SAQHY: Part (b) of my question is whether the Central Government will seize all the Kesari Dal seeds from the farmers and give alternative seeds for them to sow.

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: I have said this time and again that this is for the State Government to do.

श्री सुरेश पचौरी : सभापति महोदय बहुत महत्वपूर्ण मसला है ..... (व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति : आप उसको बाकायदा भेजिए, देख लेंगे ।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 322. Shri Bekal Utsahi Not here.

*322. [*The questioners (Shri Bekal Ptsahi and Shri Murlidhar Chandra. Kant Bhaandare) were absent for answer vide cols. infra* 31-32].

Shdi M. C. Bhandare not here. Question No. 323.

DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Q. No. 323.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRA-KANT BHANDARE: Sir what happened to Q. No. 322.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called the names. Both of you were absent. You are late. You have lost it.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRA-KANT BHANDARE: I am sorry. I was on time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. Mr. Bhandare came after I called and I passed on to the next questions. I saw you coming from the gate. You lost it because you were late by a few seconds.

SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRA-KANT BHANDARE: O.K., Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was searching for you all the time, because you never missed any chance.

SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: It is a very important question. Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called Question No. 323. That's all.

Crop Insurance Scheme in Andhra Pradesh

@*323 DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the amount paid by the farmers to the General Insurance Corporation under Crop Insurance Scheme in Andhra Pradesh during the years 1989-90 and 1990-91; and

(b) what is the amount that has been given to farmers by the Corporation as compensation during that period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The amount paid by the farmers to the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC) towards the premium chargeable for insurance of their crops under the Comprehensive Crop Insuranec Scheme (CCIS) during 1989-90 and 1990-91 is Rs. 3.30 crore and Rs. 1.53 crores, respectively.

(b) The total amount of indemnity claims paid to the farmers by the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC) in Andhra Pradesh under the CCIS during 1989-90 and 1990-91 is Rs 24.47 crore and Rs. 4.78 crore, respectively.

@Previously Starred Question 263, Transferred from the 10th December 1991.